



Kentucky Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide Overview – Summary

The *Kentucky Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide* was developed by a diverse group of early childhood educators across the state to provide guidance to early childhood programs as they develop or revise their assessment system to measure child progress and improvement related to *Kentucky's Early Childhood Standards*. This document is designed as a companion piece to the *Kentucky Early Childhood Standards*, which provides a framework to assist families, early care and education professionals, administrators, and others in understanding what children are able to know and do from birth through four years of age.

Purpose of the Building a Strong Foundation for School Success Series

All three components of the *Building a Strong Foundation for School Success* series have been carefully designed so that the materials can be used by **all** early care and education professionals working with young children from birth to 5 years of age, both in home and center-based settings. The *Early Childhood Standards* help ensure quality early care and education services by providing a common language through which program staff can express expectation for young children. The *Early Childhood Quality Self-Study* helps programs evaluate their services and determine areas of strength and those areas that need to be addressed to better help children meet the early childhood standards. Similarly, the *Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide* provides recommended guidelines and practices in all areas of assessment: screening, diagnostic, classroom/instructional and program evaluation. In addition, both the standards and assessment guide will provide valuable information to help early care and education programs, be accountable for, and document both the results and benefits of their programs.

The *Kentucky Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide* includes the following sections: Introduction, Overview, Screening, Diagnostic, Classroom/Instructional, Recommended Assessments, Program Evaluation, Professional Development, and Appendix. Definitions of the major components are:

- ❖ **Continuous Assessment System:** An assessment process that 1) includes both formal and informal assessments that are conducted on a regular basis, 2) is integrated with instruction at various times, 3) improves learning and helps guide and direct the teaching-learning process, 4) informs every aspect of instruction and curriculum (Kentucky Department of Education, March, 2004).
- ❖ **Screening:** “the use of a brief procedure or instrument designed to identify, from within a large population of children, those who may need further assessment to verify development and/or health risks” (Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), 2004). Since the purpose of the *Early Childhood Assessment Guide* is to recommend component parts of a comprehensive, continuous assessment system for early childhood programs that address multiple developmental domains; single domain screening instruments were not included in the document.
- ❖ **Diagnostic:** Assessment tools are defined as those that are designed to provide information about a child’s health or developmental status (typically as compared to other children of the same age) and may be used to establish eligibility for special services. Two specific types of assessment tools are discussed: multi-domain and single domain.
- ❖ **Classroom/Instructional:** “an ongoing process of observing a child’s current competencies (including knowledge, skills, dispositions and attitudes) and using the information to help the child develop further in the context of family and caregiving and learning environments” (Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), 2004).

Methods of Collecting Continuous Assessment Information

The *Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide* addresses the four primary methods used to collect data when conducting classroom/instruction assessments using a performance or authentic approach: observation, interview, evaluating children’s work, and direct testing. Recommended practice would suggest that all of these methods are important in classroom/instruction assessment. All of these methods can be a part of an early childhood continuous assessment system; however, they should include normal routines and classroom activities and be directly relevant to instructional decisions to help children make progress and monitor their progress toward developmental goals.

The *Kentucky Early Childhood Continuous Assessment Guide* is available to download from this web site:

<http://www.kidsnow.ky.gov>

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